

Community Emergency Response Training

Organized by Montgomery CERT



Project Goal

To teach people to be resilient by showing how they can avoid problems and respond correctly if first responders aren't available when a disaster strikes.

The goal is to be "going from a climate of fear to a culture of preparedness," as Janet Neopolitano has said. Citizens are trained over a month-long period so that they become a deployable group of 50 to 100 people who can supplement firefighter or police during an emergency situation, for example helping to evacuate a nursing home.

Project Components

This is a community program of the Volunteer Services division of Fire and Rescue, which works closely with Office of Emergency Management. Volunteers are trained on methods that terrorists use and how to mitigate the situation if terrorism should occur.

Planning

Volunteers must take a free class for 28 hours, after which they get a certificate from FEMA. To register, go online www.montgomerycert.org Classes fill up quickly.

How Many Volunteers?

There are 30 people allowed in the class. Anyone age 18 and up can register.

Time Commitment

28 hours.

Expenses

About \$100 per student, but this is paid for by Department of Homeland Security grants.

Publicity

Information is available on the County website and the program is also heavily publicized through word-of-mouth.

Challenges

There is a little bit of physicality involved and CPR involves getting onto someone's chest, but there the only requirement is a willingness to learn.

Results

The CERT program leads to "a more resilient community for all of us," said Greg St. James. "Stuff does happen and it will, and how do we bounce back from that? We are part of the prevention and mitigation solutions. We can't prevent earthquakes and hurricanes, but this program empowers citizens to take action for themselves and their families rather than call 911 for response when the system is overwhelmed. You can choose to do nothing in a disaster or choose to do your best. We won't make you a firefighter but we can help enable you to make a difference on a positive scale." Also, a CERT team has been sent to Haiti to help there after the earthquake.

Tips/Key Steps:

Only sign up if you think you can attend all the classes. You cannot get certificate if you not do the classroom hours. The certificate is from FEMA.

Citizens volunteer to become part of the Community Emergency Response Training (or Team).

